

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/10/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411C110425)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Sub Total	20	18
Total	20	18

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 3: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411C110425)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
 - (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.
 - (3) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

Note: We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation

- (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and
- (2) IES/ NCEE Technical Methods papers.

Strengths:

The evaluation plans centers on the use of a regression-discontinuity (RD) design to estimate program impacts. The RD design is well suited to the scenario described regarding the enrollment into the ERWC, and the RD design, if successfully executed, provides an unbiased estimate of ERWC on the outcome variables. The primary outcome variable for the RD design, EPT, is well suited to the evaluation as a well-aligned, sensitive, and policy relevant outcome measure. The scoring procedure for the EPT, including blind raters with 100% double reads and 15% read-behinds, is appropriate. The RD study also includes several long-term outcomes that are policy relevant. The RD study has the statistical power to detect small effects, and the analysis plan includes steps to examine the functional form of the model.

The evaluation includes plans to assess implementation fidelity and use results from the fidelity findings to help interpret the findings from the impact study. The implementation evaluation will collect data at both the school and teacher level using a variety of data sources and data collection methods, such as principals, teachers, and students and surveys, checklists, and focus groups. The fidelity evaluation also includes a measure of program dosage via the checklist used to assess the extent to which program modules are completed. Results from the fidelity study will be provided to coaches and professional learning communities to help address challenges in implementation. The fidelity evaluation also includes classroom observations to assess instructional quality and student engagement. The fidelity evaluation also includes several methods for assessing how EERW is reaching students and how students at different proficiency levels respond to the program.

Sufficient funding has been allocated to the evaluation study, and the researchers leading the evaluation have the expertise and experience to successfully complete the tasks described.

Weaknesses:

The main weakness of the evaluation plan is a failure to mention how the placement of students in treatment or control for the RD study can be ensured. Placing students in treatment and control groups solely on their scores on the CST is critical to the causal inference of the RD design. Given importance of adherence to placement according to CST scores, some steps should be taken to help ensure students are placed solely on

the basis of their CST scores, and steps should be taken to check the impact analysis data set for adherence to this rule.

Other minor weaknesses include a failure to indicate how discrepant scores on the EPT will be resolved. Presumably, outcome scores will be the average of the two raters, but this was not specified. Also, the ERWC final writing prompt outcome variable based on released EPT exam doesn't add much value over and above the EPT outcome, and this outcome may be subject to teaching to the test or practice effects given that it is from a released item. The analysis for the RD design fails to account for the nesting of students within schools. The analysis should at least include a school level model with a random school intercept. Another minor weakness was failure to mention a sampling plan for placing classroom observers in select schools.

Reader's Score: **18**

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Last Updated: 10/10/11 12:00 AM

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Last Updated: 10/6/11 12:00 AM

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Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411C110425)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	19
Sub Total	20	19
Total	20	19

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 3: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411C110425)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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 - (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
 - (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.
 - (3) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

Note: We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation

- (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and
- (2) IES/ NCEE Technical Methods papers.

Strengths:

The research questions, the logic model, the milestones and timelines are all clearly articulated and presented in an easy-to-follow fashion. The primary statistical analysis is a good match for the design and the plans for implementing the cut-score are provided. The description of the analysis adds a nice touch to demonstrate understanding of the method. The details of the program components, the instruments to be developed, down to a general outline of the questions on each, are all provided. The use of a well-respected, independent evaluation group, WestEd, adds credibility to the evaluation. Through state initiatives already in place, this project will be supported by the partners' early development experience.

The project will be well-documented with surveys, interviews, observations and focus groups. All of the planned data collection is purposeful and focused to provide improvement and/or details for replication. The site observations will be scheduled at three points during the academic year. The use of a 'low-inference' checklist is an interesting way to collect fidelity data while allowing for variability in implementation. The method could be useful to the methods field in general.

The detail on the line items is exceptionally informative. The presentation is transparent and straightforward. The cost is reasonable given the number of students to be reached, the thoroughness of the evaluation. The low-cost alternatives are an interesting way to demonstrate the value and fairness of the cost.

Weaknesses:

A few details need to be added to the evaluation design. Check that the cut score was actually successfully implemented to separate the groups. Add an adjustment for students nested within schools. Describe how the schools will be selected to participate. Explain how the use of the released EPT will provide a more valid score than the actual EPT score.

Reader's Score: 19

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Last Updated: 10/6/11 12:00 AM